

rules of every building society established under the measure shall set forth various formal matters, as for instance the terms upon which subscription shares are to be issued, and the manner in which contributions are to be paid to the society, and the withdrawals by members, with tables showing the amount due to the society for principal and interest. Another important point is that the rules must show the purpose to which the funds of the society are to be applied, and the manner in which they are to be invested. Subclause 8 of Clause 9 provides that the rules must show the manner in which advances are to be made and repaid, the deductions, if any, for premiums, and the conditions upon which the borrower can redeem the amount due from him before the expiration of the period for which the advance was made. Another important provision is that the rules must provide for an annual or a more frequent audit of accounts, and an inspection by the auditors of the mortgages and other securities belonging to the society. That is a similar provision to one which this House a week or two ago inserted—and, as I think, very properly—in the measure relating to friendly societies. Clause 52 is outside general provisions. It permits of an infant becoming a member of a building society—a very desirable provision in connection with matters of this kind. Clause 90, dealing with investments, provides that a society shall not advance money on the security of any freehold or leasehold property which is subject to a prior mortgage, unless the prior mortgage is in favour of the society making the advance. If any advance is made contrary to that provision, then the members of the committee or the management of the society who authorised that advance become jointly and severally liable for any loss on the advance occasioned to the society. When the Bill was before the Legislative Assembly, the position of the Perth Building Society was brought forward, and it was pointed out that certain business which the Perth Building Society had been in the habit of doing would be affected by this new provision; and consequently an amendment was inserted in the Bill protecting the Perth Building Society. I understand that that society has done good work, which it is far from the desire of the Government to embarrass in any way; and I also understand that the society is quite satisfied with the amendment which has been made. There is a provision as regards advances upon second mortgages which is confined entirely to those societies which at the commencement of the operation of this measure were authorised by their rules to make advances on second mortgages. The general intention is that building societies shall be restricted to advances on first mortgage; and I think that is a thoroughly sound principle to apply. So far as the societies already in operation are concerned, it is not intended to do anything that will in any way prejudice their position or interfere with

their operations. Clause 21 provides restrictions upon the amount which a building society may receive by way of loan or deposit from its members. The object is to prevent the society from becoming too heavily indebted to its members. Under Clause 25 the officers of a society are compelled to give security for the fidelity of their conduct. An annual accounting is also required by the Bill, and, in addition, the registrar is entitled to compel the inspection of the books of any society. In the event of the registrar refusing to register a building society, provision is made for an appeal to the Supreme Court against the decision of the registrar. The Bill is essentially one for consideration and discussion in Committee. Its sole object is to encourage and assist the building society method by making it a safe method in which people can invest their money and acquire homes for themselves. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 29th September, 1920.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION—KEROSENE, PRICE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: Is he aware that kerosene is being sold in Singapore at 7s. a case, and can he explain the enormous difference in the price charged in Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied: No, but it is understood that oil of an inferior grade, sufficient to fill two tins, is available at the price of 7s. 4d. To this charge, however, has to be added the cost of tins, cases, and packing.

#### QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

Mr. STUBBS asked the Colonial Secretary: When do the Government intend to give effect to the recommendation of the Select Committee on the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, to place that institution under the control of a board of management?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: A Bill dealing with the future control of the Hospital for the Insane has been prepared and will be introduced to-morrow.

#### QUESTION—KALGOORLIE HOSPITAL.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: 1, What is the average cost per head per annum of the cases treated in the Kalgoorlie General Hospital (exclusive of the infectious diseases ward), and what is the average amount received per head per annum? 2, Were any cases refused admission to the infectious diseases ward at the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital, about April last, and, if so, what was the reason for their non-admission?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The cost per patient per day at Kalgoorlie Hospital for the financial year ended 30th June last was 7s. 2½d. This figure is inclusive of the Infectious Ward. No separate costing record is maintained for this ward, but if that ward were excluded there would be no appreciable difference in the figure quoted. 1,290 patients were dealt with during the year ended 30th June last, and £2,969 4s. 6d. was received in patients' fees, an average of £2 6s. per head. 2, There is no information at Head Office indicating that any cases have been refused admission, and a report on the matter suggested in this question has been asked for.

#### QUESTION—INFLUENZA SCARE.

##### *Stranded West Australians.*

Mr. JONES asked the Premier: 1, How many West Australian visitors, who were stranded in the East during the influenza scare of 1919, received advances from the Government, and what was the amount paid? 2, How many of them repaid the advances in three months in accordance with the signed agreement? 3, Did the Government expect to lose any of the amounts so loaned?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 148. £1,266 19s. 8d. 2, 34. 3, Not when the advances were made.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. ANGELO, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr. Duff (Claremont) on the ground of ill-health.

On motions by Mr. O'LOGHLEN, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder), and to Mr. Holman (Murchison), on the ground of ill-health.

#### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

##### 1, Health Act Continuance.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary.

##### 2, University of Western Australia Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier.

#### BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—PARLIAMENT (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN).

Report of Committee adopted.

#### MOTION—WATER CONSERVATION, AVON RIVER.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) had given notice of the following motion:—

That in view of the influx of large numbers of immigrants in the near future and their part absorption on closer settlement lines, the time has arrived when a thorough investigation of the Avon Valley and Avon River to determine whether the fine fruit-growing lands along this valley can be utilised for intensive culture, the inquiry to cover (1) examination and comparison of the overflow of the Northam and Mundaring weirs; (2) examination by an engineer or engineering party of the course of the Avon River, and to decide upon the best method for conserving the water and converting it into a live continuously flowing stream, if such be possible, the engineer to formulate a scheme and give an approximate idea of the cost of the undertaking in its entirety, and the cost of each section should it be found advisable to do the work in sections; (3) a systematic and thorough analysis by reliable men of the river water at various depths, at various places, and at various times of the year; (4) treatment of alkaline waters and soils and remedies, flooding system, chemical antidotes, eradication by vegetable growth such as gums and shrubs along watercourse, saltbush, lucerne, beet, etc.; (5) an investigation of the plans and maps which were prepared when the late Lord Forrest was Premier and when £20,000 was voted for the conserving of the Avon River flood-waters, which vote was allowed to lapse.

Mr. SPEAKER [4.48]: Before calling on the notice of motion standing in the name

of Mr. Griffiths, the member for York, I desire to point out that I must disallow paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the motion, and that the first paragraph will need slight amendment in order to express the hon. member's intention and to complete the sentence. If the hon. member will ask for leave to amend the first paragraph by the insertion of the words "should be made" between the words "investigation" and "of," it will convey all that the hon. member desires. The other paragraphs of the motion I must disallow as being against the rules of the House. They are more in the nature of argument in favour of the motion.

**MR. GRIFFITHS:** I ask leave to amend my motion by the insertion of the words "should be made" between the words "investigation" and "of."

Leave given; the notice of motion amended accordingly.

**MR. GRIFFITHS (York) [4.50]:** 1 move—

That in view of the influx of large numbers of immigrants in the near future and their part absorption on closer settlement lines, the time has arrived when a thorough investigation should be made of the Avon Valley and Avon River to determine whether the fine fruit-growing lands along this valley can be utilised for intensive culture.

My intention in moving this motion is not to provoke an academic discussion, but to lay before the House certain facts and certain data which I have gathered as the result of months of patient search. I believe that the information which I shall submit to hon. members this afternoon will force them to admit that the scheme I advocate has a utilitarian value and is perfectly practicable. Indeed, I hope to persuade the House that there is something more in this motion than meets the eye. In its original form the motion looked more formidable than it really is. However, as you, Mr. Speaker, have pointed out, a considerable part of the original motion is not needed. The framing of the motion in its original form, if it has done nothing else, has placed in some sort of order the ideas I have at the back of my head. In regard to the particulars as to overflow of the Northam and Mundaring weirs, that information is already in existence, and it merely needs to be made available in such a form as to be readily appreciated by those who have to consider the scheme. Hon. members will realise the great wealth of water that rushes down to the Indian Ocean from the Northam weir when I state that in one year there has been as much as 212 billion gallons of overflow. That portion of the original motion which referred to an engineering party investigating the position and formulating a scheme was really the principal part of the motion, but what it asked for will be partly covered by the information referred to in the last paragraph of the motion, which information was

compiled in the days when the late Lord Forrest was Premier of this State. About 19 years ago a sum of £20,000 was placed upon the Estimates for the purpose of improving the Avon River, but for some unknown reason the vote was allowed to lapse. A good deal of preliminary investigation took place, and only this morning I had the pleasure of looking through the old plans and seeing the great amount of careful and methodical work that had been done in the matter of survey. This information will be very valuable should investigation such as I ask for take place. As regards the salinity of the river water, some investigation has taken place in that regard also; but still the information available is so scanty and incomplete as to be of very little practical use. It is with the idea of getting something more complete and more thorough that I have asked that special attention should be paid to the testing of the salinity of the Avon River water. The fourth paragraph of the original motion referred to data already in existence. Even I as a layman have been able to gather together a mass of information bearing upon the subject, so that the work should be easy for an expert; and let me point out that the subject interests not only the York electorate, but many other parts of the State. Many members representing constituencies where there is a great deal of salt land and where a great deal of the water obtained by sinking is salt and makes cultivation of the land impossible, will be interested in that subject. To the west of York itself there is a stretch of country which, presumably owing to improper methods of cultivation, has had the salt brought to the surface, making it unfit for use. If I succeed in calling attention to these salt lands of Western Australia, I shall have accomplished something for the benefit of the State. When speaking here about 12 months ago on hydraulic and other details of the irrigation vote, I went to considerable trouble to impress upon the House what has been done in the past and what is being done at present in this State, and also what was being done in the newer countries of the world. I also referred to what had been done, after the war ended, in many of those countries where water works were in existence anciently, long before any of us were thought of. Again, I brought to the attention of hon. members the operations of the Eastern States in this connection; and now I am getting nearer home. In the Eastern States there are available for newcomers numerous varieties of agriculture into which they can enter. We had here only last night a gentleman who illustrated to us what the energy of Mildura can do in this State. I refer to the "elusive Pimpernel" of the Murray, Mr. de Garis. That gentleman has shown Western Australia what vim and titanic energy can do in the person of one individual, though certainly he is backed up by a certain amount of

cash. That individual has rendered possible a scheme which I think no Government of this State would be prepared to undertake. If we talked about spending £300,000 here upon what would be regarded as an experiment, there would be a howl of protest throughout the length and breadth of the country. It would never be permitted. However, Mr. de Garis, who has come from Victoria, illustrates the progress made by the Eastern States in the matter of irrigation. Those hon. members who are Victorian born will not find anything new in what I have to say about irrigation in Victoria, but I have no doubt that to many other members a great deal of it will be fresh. The progressive little State of Victoria has done more than any other in the way of water conservation and irrigation. The list of Victorian schemes is a formidable one, including the Goulburn Valley scheme, the Goulburn River works, which cost £730,000, the Broken River works, the Loddon River works, the Kow Swamp works, the Kerang North-West Lake works, the Long Lake pumping works, and the Murray scheme, embracing Cobuna, Swan Hill, Nyah, Mildura, White Cliffs, Wimmera, Coliban, and Bacchus Marsh. Victoria has 37,475 acres under lucerne, and no less than eight free head works, 11 water works districts, 18 irrigation and water supply districts, and three water works trusts, apart from the Mildura trust. The area supplied with water for stock and household purposes is no less than 13 million acres. The area under irrigation is 215,333 acres, and 14,500 acres are irrigated under permits or licenses. What has taken place there is something wonderful. It should spur us to be up and doing in respect of some of our local schemes. They have there no fewer than 135 towns, exclusive of principal cities and suburbs, supplied with water from artificial schemes. The rainfall ranges from some 15 inches in the Mildura district to seven inches in part of the mallee country. That mallee country, which at one time was only sparsely populated, is to-day carrying large numbers of successful farmers, whose prosperity is largely due to improved methods of cultivation and to generous supplies of water. I think the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) can corroborate much of what I have said in regard to Victoria. I have gone into these details to show what great enterprise has been displayed by that State in catering for the requirements of newcomers. Only this morning Mr. DeGaris expressed to me his belief that irrigation is going to be the ultimate salvation of Australia. I have been amongst irrigation settlers and I know what can be done. In the Avon Valley we have country similar to that on the south coast of New South Wales, consisting largely of decomposed granite, highly favourable to the growth of the finest apples, pears, and stone fruit, the earliest that New South Wales produces. The Avon Valley has the advantage that it not only grows the apples

and pears and stone fruits, but also the citrus fruits and vines, and has a climate capable of drying any description of fruits without artificial aid. Knowing the very fine results that have been obtained by irrigation from the Goldfields water scheme on orchards in the Northam district, I should be wanting in my duty if I did not bring before the Chamber the need for investigating that fine stretch of country along the valley of the Avon, with a view to getting it recognised. It has railways, schools and all the utilities of civilisation already provided. It is within a few hours of the metropolis and, whilst it is already producing a great deal of wealth, it is not producing a tithe of what it would be capable of producing under irrigation.

Mr. Smith: What is the length of the river?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Possibly over 100 miles. It rises somewhere beyond Beverley and flows into the Swan.

Mr. Smith: That would not compare with the Murray River.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am not trying to so compare it. But we have certain schemes here which we should bring into operation. Along the Darling Range we have 17 surveys already taken. Whilst the contemplated schemes are only small they are capable of being operated at much less expenditure than would be required in the bigger schemes. It is those things we have in hand which I am mostly concerned about. The only lesson we have to learn from the Murray River scheme is the energy of the people conducting it. I have here a good deal of information which I shall impart as briefly as possible. Members will be surprised to learn that the watershed of the Avon River is 12 times greater than that which supplies the water to the Mundaring Weir. Whilst the Avon watershed covers 4,000 square miles, that of Mundaring is restricted to 330 square miles, and the volume of the water flowing over the Mundaring weir is much less than that which goes over the Northam weir. I gathered this morning from the gaugings at the Water Supply Department that in 1917—an exceptional year, it is true—there flowed over the Northam weir 212,295,200,000 gallons of water. The annual flow ranges from that record down to five billions in 1919. In 1915 it was over 60 billions, in 1916 over 21 billions and in 1918 nearly 25 billions. In one day's overflow of that weir at Northam more than sufficient water passes to fill the Mundaring Weir which holds 4,661,000,000 gallons. And it must be remembered that it is all good fresh water and only becomes salty on its way down the creeks. During flood time it carries 53 grains of salt per gallon, and the salt density increases as the water flows along until at last that water is unfit for irrigation. I trust the day is not far distant when it will be utilised in its purest condition. Even a three inch flow from that weir would supply the town of Northam with all its water.

Mr. Smith: How much money would it cost?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I will come to that presently. Two per cent. of that overflow would supply all the water required by the State. In this scheme which I am advocating the main questions are, could this watercourse be so improved as to become a live watercourse the whole year round, and how is it to be done? Without anticipating the opinions of the engineers, it certainly does not appear to the lay mind that there are any insuperable difficulties. There is a continuous decline in the country all the way along the course of the river, and whilst in some parts the bed of the river is too wide, yet for great distances the banks are well defined. There seems to be nothing against, and much in favour of, a system of locks at the various points. Given these, a big reservoir at the highest point could be provided, the flow from which would reach those parts to which the water backed up by local locks could not be conducted. As I remarked just now, some 20 years ago the late Lord Forrest placed £20,000 on the Estimates for improving the Avon River. That vote was allowed to lapse. When I was down at the Water Supply Department this morning, I was shown plans demonstrating that a good deal of work which I am proposing has already been brought into existence. It has evidently been in the mind of somebody of wide outlook that it would be practicable to convert what in the summer time is a series of water holes into a continuous stream. The fact of so much preliminary work having been carried out removes a good deal of objection to my proposal. A lot of preliminary survey work has been done and levels taken, and it is now really more a question of finding out what the cost of any practicable scheme would run to. I ask in my motion that the engineers, when making their estimates of costs, shall give one estimate of the work as a whole and another of the work in sections. Work akin to this which I am bringing under the notice of the House was that of the Northam weir. Some years ago Mr. W. D. Johnson, the then Minister for Works, in conjunction with the townspeople of Northam, decided to build that weir. Although this is a much smaller scheme than the proposal to lock the Avon River, it has a bearing on the subject. The water at Northam is not used for irrigation purposes, and yet it has proved to be of great financial assistance to the town in providing a supply for the electric light works and a flour mill. It has been used in a way that was not anticipated at the time it was stored up there.

Mr. Hickmott: Is the water fresh?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It comes down in the winter containing about 53 grains of salt to the gallon. The danger point is 100 grains, and after this the water becomes too salt and the land on which it is used is rendered unfit for cultivation. At the time when the Northam scheme was first started, it was said

that the water would not last out the summer. This prediction has proved a false one, because at the end of the driest summer there has been a fine body of water left and the river bed has never been found to become dry. It would be quite possible to make out a good case for impounding the Avon River. The length involved would be about 100 miles and one can well imagine what such a stretch of water would mean. It would be a channel connecting the wealth of the agricultural areas with the metropolis, and would open up a vision of boundless possibilities for the future. Apart from the aesthetic point of view, the impounding of the river would provide a large body of water which should be suitable for irrigation purposes. Let us take the Moree irrigation farm in New South Wales. They were using artesian water there and it was rendering the land unfit for cultivation. They got experts to tackle the problem and various remedies were tried to overcome the difficulty. To-day as a result of experiments they are growing fruit trees, vegetables, maize, wheat for hay and other grain, barley, oats, in fact all the cereals it is possible to grow. There are many other places where difficulties of this nature have been overcome. There is a very big problem in front of the State as to what will be done with a good deal of our country, because of the alkaline nature of the water and the soil. In California there were large stretches of country on which it was impossible to grow anything at all. These stretches of country were covered with black alkaline deposits which rendered it impossible to use it. In the San Luis Valley they were faced with a problem which must have been very much like that sometimes mentioned by the member for Nelson in regard to the rooting up of a certain orchard. Below the surface they had a belt of alkali formed on the top of a quicksand, and the land became so saturated with salt that they could do nothing with it. They tried all methods of cultivation, drainage, mulching and flooding, but none of these things were of any use. Finally, at the suggestion of Professor Higgard, they put a few shots in and after they had done so they flooded the land and the salt was washed away through the holes. To-day the land is producing fine crops.

Mr. Smith: You might lose the Avon River altogether, if you put a few shots into it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not think so. If we give the Avon River a length of 100 miles and a width of 20 miles over which the irrigation scheme would operate, we should have 2½ million acres of irrigable land. This would be worth, on a conservative estimate, £20 per acre, or be worth £1 per acre annually. Based on 150 acres to a family, 50,000 families could be accommodated on this area. This should produce wealth amounting to at least £10 per acre per annum. This is not a new country or one which is far from the metropolis. It lies along existing lines of railway and possesses

all the utilities of civilisation such as schools, halls, churches and water supply, etc. This land is within a few hours rail of the capital and is close to the main line to the gold-fields and other centres of population. We are often complaining because our railways do not bear a fair share of the burden, in that, owing to our small population, they are not carrying as much in the way of goods as they should carry. If such a scheme as this could be brought into existence, the position should be very quickly remedied in this section. I am glad to say that more attention has been paid to this matter of late than has been paid to it in the past. The department had a letter of mine in March last and as a result of this they are devoting more attention to the gauging of the river and the amassing of data. I was rather flattered when I looking through the reports this morning to find that an inquiry I had made had had some effect in creating a little more activity in regard to the scheme, and in bringing to light a little more data than had hitherto been available. The Avon valley is a country which is unsurpassed, and if irrigation could only be brought into operation it would be a great wealth producer. In California they have an excellent climate but careful irrigation methods have had to be resorted to. They have had to adopt a particular policy there in connection with their citrus trees to counteract the local conditions of dry heat and little rain by taking the water to the orchards. One of the greatest objections to the damming of the Avon River is that the water comes down in enormous bodies from the Salt River in heavy flood times from the Yilgarn and naturally brings with it a great deal of the salt lying in the back country. It comes into the Avon somewhere about Beverley. The member for Beverley (Hon. T. F. Broun) pointed out to me that this was one of the great contaminating sources of the river. Other creeks also bring down a lot of salt that is lying in the country. This sort of thing is not new to Western Australia but is found all over the world. Wherever irrigation works have been started it has been found that this question of salt has to be carefully attended to. In the shallow deposits of water the sun evaporates the water and leaves the salt behind and the salt gradually accumulates until, in a heavy rainfall, it is swept on into the next channel of water. It might even be possible that the Salt River stream might be diverted. I have stood on the bridges over the river in winter time and have watched the immense bodies of water going to waste, and have thought that if it could be banked up the salt contents of the river would be so dispersed over a large body of water as to be rendered harmless for irrigation purposes. Even in the case of fresh water there is often trouble with salt. People have been using the water in the Coolgardie scheme and have found, after a too lavish use of it, and because the ground has not had sufficient tillage or drainage or mulching, that salt conditions have been set up which have been fatal to fruit-trees and

vegetation. My idea is to cause greater activity to be taken in regard to this question. The department has accumulated a good deal of knowledge on this subject, and I presume they are possessed of information which would take me hours of patient and toilsome work to gather together, but they should have all this at their finger tips. This matter should be taken up seriously by the irrigation experts and other officers of the departments and thoroughly gone into, so that the whole position may be studied carefully. Old settlers on the Avon will affirm that 20 years ago the water was much fresher than it is to-day. In many of the pools the water was drinkable and most of it could be used for stock. But the wholesale cutting down of timber has really taken away one of those factors which help to keep the water fresh. In consequence of the wholesale destruction of the York gum, many of the pools have become more saline. I can bring to mind in the Kellerberrin district the fact that a Mr. Perry pointed out to me some years ago that he had stripped a creek of all shrubs and timber, and the salt had risen from the creek and had spread over 20 acres of land. I was at the same place three years later, and noticing the change, inquired what had become of the salt. Mr. Perry had allowed the shrubs and suckers to grow again and the salt disappeared. The growth had absorbed the whole of the salt. A great deal of the salt is plant food. I have seen elsewhere that by permitting native plants to grow, the salt trouble has disappeared. This could be followed along the creeks and tributaries of the Avon, and in bringing that about the Forestry Department and the settlers could co-operate in planting the York gum and other trees along the banks of the creeks. There should be no trouble in carrying that out, and the result would be the absorption of the saline matter. If the experts directed their attention to this matter, they would be sure to find something which would inspire them, and the result would be that they would secure information which would enable action to be taken in the direction of removing what I consider to be a disgrace, namely the permitting of such an enormous quantity of water to run to waste year after year. I wrote to the Minister for Works in March last, and he replied that he would make available the fullest information on the subject of the damming of the Avon River, but on going to the Agricultural Department it seemed to me that those responsible there had become resigned to the fact that it was not possible to do anything in regard to the damming of the river. They state there that thousands of acres will be flooded if the river is dammed and that the salt water will contaminate the country to such a degree that it would be impossible to do any good with the water. On inquiring as to what had been done and what experiments had been made we find that the testing of the water has only been carried out in a haphazard way. Nothing of a systematic nature has been done and in that way it is impossible

to form a proper estimate as to whether the water can be made use of or not. Mr. Baxter, the Honorary Minister, in replying to a letter from me on the 12th March wrote—

Regarding the use of the water from the Avon River for irrigation, I enclose copy of analyses of samples of water taken from various localities in the Avon River and which were forwarded to the Department by the Government Analyst in July last. Commenting on this the Irrigation Expert of this Department has stated that the results of the analyses taken demonstrate clearly that the water is not suitable for irrigation purposes. He points out that root crops such as mangels, etc., might be grown successfully for a short period if the land were well drained, but he does not think it would be a payable proposition over a term of years.

He then goes on to give the several analyses of water taken at various pools. All of these show a big percentage of salt, but they are different from the analyses that I have and which were made at different times of the year. That is why I ask that independent analyses should be made of the water taken at different places, at different depths and at different times of the year. The returns which I received from the Water Supply Department this morning show that the salinity in the water is as low as 53 grains to the gallon. In some cases it is a little over 100, and as high as 182, while in an isolated case it went to 314. These figures were taken at various times of the year. We should be better able to judge what is actually the case if we had complete data. No doubt so far as the analyses which have been presented are concerned, what I suggest would be a hopeless proposition, but other figures which I have show that there is reason to hope that something can be done by holding back the water. Mr. Mann, the Government Analyst, at a Northam function recently, was reported in the "Northam Advertiser" to have made use of these remarks:—

Last year when he had been travelling around in connection with the establishment of an Agricultural College, one of the things to be decided upon was, a favourable area for the growing of fodder crops, and he had been greatly attracted by the flats on the banks of the Avon River between Northam and York. Experts from Perth had come up and they were agreed upon their suitability. There was one great difficulty, however, and that was the question of water irrigation. The pools along the Avon were very salty—more so than they had thought, for no record had been kept, as might have been expected in such a district. From experiments he had conducted in his laboratory he had found that the water contained 300 grains of salt to the gallon, and it was generally accepted that water with over 100 grains of salt to the gallon was unsuitable for irrigating purposes. He contended, however, that if the difficulty was

properly studied it could be overcome. The solution was at their door. The only data regarding the river were figures in connection with the amount of water that flowed over the weir at Northam.

In looking through the figures supplied to me, I notice that 103 billion gallons was the overflow for one month. That was July 1917. As a matter of fact the actual overflow during 1917 was 212 billion gallons, more than double. The report of Mr. Mann's remarks went on—

In flood time over 103,000,000,000 gallons went over, and when the river was in flood the percentage of salt was very much reduced. The water had been tested and showed as low as 53 grains to the gallon, but he thought more complete figures should be obtained. He desired to get Mr. Hampshire's opinion on the flats already mentioned before making any representations to the Government. If by imprisoning the water at different points, as it came down, they could reduce the salinity, the river would be admirably suited for the irrigation of the flats. It seemed to him that the thick growth along the banks was causing obstruction, and the roots of the trees forming silt.

In regard to that matter, people who live along the river bank are in accord with Mr. Mann. They say that a good deal of the growth along that river is doing good by eliminating the salt from the water. The report continues—

Could the river be cleared of these obstacles, and the channel cleaned, they would obtain a flow, which would enable them to flush the river to an extent never before contemplated, and if it were flushed regularly, it would cause a permanent improvement in the land. In support of this theory, Mr. Mann instanced an example of sluicing that had been carried out at Mundaring (when the water showed signs of becoming too salty) with excellent results, and maintained that what had been done there could also be accomplished here, although it might take one or two years.

Hon. members will be surprised to know that the Mundaring Weir was getting very salty and it was found necessary to open the sluice gates. In conversation with Mr. de Garis, who is at present in this State, I learned that land along the Murray River had been sold for as much as £300 an acre for irrigation purposes. That is what makes me so keen to see whether we cannot do something in a similar direction.

Mr. Smith: And submerge the country.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have heard that argument before and though I do not profess to be an engineer, I contend that if a dam is built as suggested at the highest point, I do not see where the flooding can happen.

Mr. Smith: If you build dams you must submerge a lot of the country.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It has been argued at York that the damming of the river would

flood the lower part of the town. On the other hand, I have heard arguments to the contrary, and I have moved this motion with the desire of arriving at the true facts of the case from an engineering point of view.

Mr. Pickering: What is the maximum depth of the river?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Burlong pool is about 23 feet deep. The Mile pool on the other side of York is 1½ miles long, and that water is only brackish. There is a great body of water and a succession of these pools, and the pity of it is that they are not utilised.

Mr. Smith: What about the salt?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Even with the meagre details we have, we are able to say that the salt runs as low as 53 grains and as high as 300 grains. The river has been tested in only a few places, and it seems to me always in the same places, round about Burgess's Siding, on the Mortlock River, and at two or three places near York. I ask for a thorough and systematic examination and for samples to be taken and analyses made so that we shall have complete data to work on. It is idle for the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) to talk about the water being too salt. We must not despair on that account. In other parts of the world greater difficulties have been contended with and successfully overcome. In regard to all irrigation work we have been too slow. We have a man coming from Victoria who is going to show us how to go about settling our land.

Mr. Pickering: He is not suggesting irrigation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, he is, but from dams. That, however, is a different proposition.

Mr. Smith: He was talking about sugar.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If I can commend to the attention of the Lands Department and of soil chemists and experts the problem of the salt lands of this State, I shall feel that I have not laboured in vain. Various remedies could be brought to bear upon the salt problem. There are chemical antidotes and, in some places where salt has proved troublesome, land plasters of gypsum and lime have proved successful. Salt has also been eradicated by means of vegetable growth, such as gums and shrubs, saltbush, lucerne, sorghum, and beet. At the Moree artesian irrigation farm the salt difficulty has been overcome by wise and careful cultivation of plants adaptable to that particular country.

Mr. Green: Did you ever try sweet nitre on that bad water?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At about the time I gave notice of my motion I saw on a newspaper poster board in large bold capitals—"De Garis may settle in the West—Here there is room for many Milduras." An article appeared in that bright little sheet which is headed "One hundred per cent. Australian," namely, the "Call." Mr. de Garis was interviewed by a representa-

tive of the "Call," and the following is the report:—

"I am looking forward to seeing Kendenup all right, and, to use an Americanism, I have a hunch that I'll like it. The property has an acreage of 50,000 acres, and we have big plans with regard to it."

"A sort of Mildura of the West!"—

"Well, something like that, and I have the confidence in Western Australia and its possibilities to know that the most ambitious project in primary production is bound to come off all right if properly handled." "The parcelling out and settling of Kendenup will be a huge proposition?"—"Yes, a model settlement, smiling landscapes and all things poetical and practical are in our vision and, if Kendenup justifies our expectations, the scheme will be put into operation right away."

The Honorary Minister: And Gascoyne will be only a circumstance.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The extract continues—

Take it from me—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What has that to do with the motion?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am quoting this in support of what can be done in regard to land which at present is carrying about seven people and 7,000 sheep. On that land it is expected to settle 7,000 people. I wish to awaken interest in the possibility of utilising this river, the flats and the banks, so that it shall carry ten or twelve times the population it is carrying today. The extract continues—

Take it from me, the people of Western Australia haven't yet awakened fully to the possibilities of their own land. But you will hear more about Kendenup when I have seen it. . . . I said when I was here before, and I am more than ever convinced of it, the West has so many resources, so many opportunities, so much wealth strewn broadcast that Westerners themselves can hardly realise it.

He was asked whether he was going to settle here, and he replied that probably he would. He was asked, "You do not feel that you will be wasting your time here?" and his reply was, "Not at all. The West is a land capable of containing many Milduras, and are we out to try to give it the first." This gentleman went to Mildura, and though Mildura was famous before his advent, he demonstrated to the people of that settlement the great possibilities of the place. He inaugurated a co-operative scheme such as the people in their wildest flights of imagination had never dreamed of. I should like to see something of the same spirit of enthusiasm manifested among our people in their attitude towards the possibilities here awaiting realisation. I have not brought forward this motion with any idea of wasting the time of the House. I have devoted many months to research for data, and I have not quoted one tithe of what I have collected, but I



think I have given enough to satisfy members. My object is to get this matter inquired into, and I hope members will realise that there may be more in this proposal than at first glance meets the eye. There are possibilities which should be tested and investigated. The department evidently think there is something in it. Possibly the scheme may be too big for us at the present time, but we can at any rate proceed with the collection of information in a systematic way, which information will prove a useful guide. This course will not entail great expense, and it will have the advantage of proving whether the scheme is practicable. I ask the House to accept the motion.

(On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.)

#### MOTION—PRICE FIXING, AUSTRALIAN COMMODITIES.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [6.3]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the practice of making world's parity a basis for fixing prices of commodities produced and consumed in Australia is unsound, and that cost of production and forwarding to market should be the factors considered in fixing such prices.

I am fully aware that I am proposing to deal with a very debatable subject, and one which is worthy of earnest consideration by all sections of the community, including private citizens as well as members of this Assembly. At the outset let me, if I can, remove an impression which I believe exists in the minds of representatives of Western Australian wheat growers, that wheat would be the only commodity affected by the carrying of this motion.

The Honorary Minister: What is world's parity?

Mr. MULLANY: I shall have to refer the Honorary Minister to the political organisation that controls him. The organisation in question make a lot of noise about world's parity, and claim that they have a right to it. The Minister representing the organisation making that claim now wants to know what world's parity is. If they get what they are looking for, it will mean more serious trouble than Australia has ever had to face.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They will get more than they bargain for.

Mr. MULLANY: Much more.

Mr. Pickering: Does this motion apply to sandalwood?

Mr. MULLANY: Yes, and to coal, copper, hides, hot air, and other things. The terms of the motion are wide enough to embrace all the products of Western Australia, or even of Australia. I have purposely worded the motion so as to include all commodities produced in Australia. I know perfectly well that the Parliament of this State has no

power to fix the prices of commodities produced in other parts of Australia; but the motion has a wide significance and applies to all Australia, and not to one State only. I feel sure that if the motion is carried, the Government will apply the principle, so far as they can, to all commodities consumed in Western Australia. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) is one of the foremost advocates of world's parity for the farmers; but this motion does not deal with farmers only, but with all Western Australian producers. The effect of the motion, if carried, will be to extend the principle of arbitration, which already applies to the worker, to those who require his labour. The Prices Regulation Commission will be absolutely helpless and useless if we admit the principle of world's parity. In that case the Commissioners will only be able to make the taxpayers of this State pay their salaries, without giving those taxpayers any return. The motion seeks to apply the principle of arbitration to those who are engaged in farming, manufacturing, and mining, or in producing any articles whatever in Australia. Under existing circumstances, the Arbitration Act compels the worker, who has only his labour to dispose of, to accept the decision of the Arbitration Court as to the price of his labour.

Mr. Pickering: That is his London parity.

Mr. MULLANY: How the member for Sussex has got on to that line of reasoning I do not know.

Mr. Johnston: Will the motion apply to gold?

Mr. MULLANY: Yes. I am sure that every man engaged in the goldmining industry would be pleased if this motion were carried and its principle applied to that industry, because the cost of production and of conveying to market would be the factors considered in fixing a price. If that principle were applied to gold, the price of gold would now be something like £10 per ounce. The worker cannot get away from the decision of the Arbitration Court as regards the price of his labour, and the basis on which the Arbitration Court works is the cost of living.

Mr. Maley: Is the worker prepared to sell his labour for less than it is worth?

Mr. MULLANY: He is not allowed to get what his labour is worth. The Arbitration Court fixes what he is to get for his labour, and the court works on the basis of the cost of living. The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) talks about what the worker's labour is worth. I ask, worth to whom?

Mr. Maley: Worth to him.

Mr. MULLANY: The worker must accept the decision of the Arbitration Court, which is based upon the cost of living, or, in other words, what will be sufficient recompense to keep the worker in such a physical condition as will enable him to deliver the goods which, under the terms of his employment, he has contracted to deliver, namely his labour.

Mr. Maley: You must bear in mind that wheat is the farmer's wages.

Mr. MULLANY: We all know that. The motion, if carried, would simply mean that the fellow workers of the ordinary worker would be placed on the same basis as he is on. The railway man, the miner, the navy, must accept the decision of the Arbitration Court based upon the cost of living. We want to apply the same principle to the worker who does not work for a direct wage but depends for the recompense of his labour upon the sale of his product. This motion seeks to place the man working for himself, conducting a business, or producing something which the community needs, upon the same basis as the man who has only the one commodity of his labour to sell.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. MULLANY: Before tea I was discussing the fact that the Arbitration Courts of Australia take the cost of living as a basis for wage fixing. I have never heard of an Arbitration Court judge in Australia taking the rate of wage in overseas countries as a basis for wages in Australia. That being so, I wish to ask why should the worker who does not sell his labour direct, who depends upon the sale of his product as a recompense for his labour, why should he be placed on a different footing from that of his fellow worker who is working for wages direct? Why should the primary producer in Australia demand London parity as a basis on which to fix the price of his product? We have a number of price fixing commissions in Australia, one appointed by the Federal Government and, I believe, one in each of the States. In my opinion the Prices Regulation Commission in Western Australia is practically useless. All it can do is to endeavour to ascertain the landed cost of imported goods and from that check retail traders who may be endeavouring to make undue profits out of the distribution of these goods. The Commissioners are not permitted to touch the vital point, namely, the cost of production of locally grown essential commodities which the people must have. If there is a demand for those commodities overseas, and if the commodities can be exported the Commissioners must take as a basis the price which those commodities will bring in the overseas markets. As an illustration take firewood for local consumption. The Prices Regulation Commissioners have definitely fixed the price for this commodity. But if this commodity could be exported they would not be permitted to do this, but would have to take the world's parity as a basis. I have not seen the proprietors of woodyards in the metropolitan area wearing diamonds or riding in motor cars. They are kept down to the mark by the Prices Regulation Commission.

Mr. Thomson: There is no comparison there.

Mr. MULLANY: But the point is that while the Prices Regulation Commission can go into details as to the cost of production of firewood in the metropolitan area, this commodity not being exportable, in respect of commodities which lend themselves to exportation it is claimed that, not the cost of production, but the price overseas, should be taken into consideration. I say this principle is unsound. Amongst the essential commodities suitable for export are leather, wool, butter, coal, dried fruits, meat, and wheat. I realise that there are difficulties in the way of arranging a system under which those commodities could be made available to local consumers at a price which would allow a reasonable profit to the producer and at the same time prevent any producer or group of producers from exporting the whole of their product and securing the higher prices available overseas. Probably it would mean an extension of the pooling system to embrace those commodities. But I believe that if the principle were admitted, those difficulties could be overcome. Take leather: I think I am correct in saying that in pre-war days leather could be purchased in Western Australia at 2s. per lb., whereas to-day it costs 5s. 6d. per lb. Will any hon. member say that the cost of that commodity has gone up to so great an extent? But this is the position: at various time sales of hides are held in Western Australia. Foreign buyers there bid in open competition. The whole market is controlled by the price which overseas buyers are prepared to pay. Here the Prices Regulation Commissioners come in. They are not permitted to touch the vital point, the cost of producing those hides; the most they are permitted to do is to ascertain the price which those hides bring in the open market. They can then follow the hides through the tannery, taking the cost of tanning, and follow the leather until it is in the shape of the finished boot. But the damage is done before the Prices Regulation Commissioners are permitted to have any say; it was done at the original sale of hides. Here again it is not the cost of production, but the price the hides will bring overseas, which is taken into consideration. Much the same thing applies to wool. Wool sales are held in various centres, and here again the price of the commodity is established. Unfortunately we have very little wool manufacturing in Australia, although it is pleasing to know that of late years some progress has been made in this direction. If we admit the principle of price fixing, the Prices Regulation Commissioners should be able to ascertain approximately the cost of producing the wool and, from that basis, fix the price of the manufactured articles.

Mr. Johnston: What would you give the squatter as a living wage?

Mr. MULLANY: That would be for the Prices Regulation Commissioners to say—what profit he should have on his commodity. Butter is in much the same position. In the Eastern States they do not take the cost of producing this commodity; it is controlled

by the price being paid for butter in England.

Mr. Underwood: Or in Germany.

Mr. MULLANY: And that price is largely controlled by the Danish market. To suit their own purpose the Danish profiteers have held up the supply for some time, all of which has its effect, just as a bad season in Denmark would have, on the prices in Australia which, clearly, are fixed by conditions obtaining in other parts of the world.

Mr. Smith: What would you do if the cost of production was greater than the price obtainable overseas?

Mr. MULLANY: If the hon. member will read the motion, he will see that it imposes no time limitation. I am prepared to admit that if the London parity was lower than a price which would give a fair and reasonable profit to the Australian producer, we should be entitled to say that we would give the Australian producer a fair and reasonable profit.

Mr. Pickering: And that is as far as you can go.

Mr. Johnston: Would you do that in a drought year?

Mr. MULLANY: I will deal with that later on. Another commodity is locally produced coal. The Collie coalfields are now producing practically all the coal we require in Western Australia. The "West Australian" in its leading article to-day claims that the proprietors of the Collie coal mines have just as sound a cause to demand world's parity as has any other section of the community.

Mr. Thomson: An absolutely ridiculous comparison.

Mr. MULLANY: I should like the hon. member to show why it is so ridiculous. Coal is one commodity—

Mr. Thomson: Which costs nothing to produce.

Mr. MULLANY: If the price obtainable in other parts of the world for coal is considerably higher than is being paid to the Collie coal proprietors, then those proprietors have just as sound a claim to London parity as has any other section of our community. It does not require very much consideration to realise the position the State would be in if that claim were admitted. It would simply stop every industry operating in Western Australia. There is another product of this State in which we are taking a leading part in the world's production, namely dried fruits, such as currants, sultanas, etc. We are producing more than sufficient for local requirements. Most hon. members have heard of the Australian Dried Fruits Association operating in Mildura and Renmark districts, of Victoria and South Australia respectively. This association controls the bulk of the dried fruits produced in those States.

Mr. Underwood: And this State.

Mr. MULLANY: This association was placing its commodities on the open market at what it thought to be a fair and reasonable profit on the cost of production, but it was found that food speculators were buy-

ing up practically the whole of the product and exporting it to other countries at a big profit. I believe that some of the speculators made large fortunes out of this traffic. So acute did the position become that the association requested the Federal Government to place some restrictions upon the export of the commodities. They put their case fairly and clearly that it was not to the interests of the consuming public of Australia that these food speculators should be allowed to operate in this way. The association said quite frankly "We can supply this commodity at a reasonable profit to ourselves and at a lower price than it is bringing in the world's market to-day." Unfortunately, the Federal Government refused to place these restrictions upon the export, with the result that, in order to protect the growers, the association had to raise the price of the products to the consumers of Australia. Does not this illustrate clearly the justice of the case put forward in the motion? Why should we, as representatives of the people, allow the people to be robbed in this way by food speculators? I give every credit to the association and producers who endeavoured to take this action, and I believe I could not give a better illustration of the justice of the case I am putting forward to-night than this. We know that the price of beef on the hoof in the metropolitan markets is higher than it should be, and that those engaged in stock raising are making more money than they are entitled to make out of the public. It will no doubt be interesting to hon. members to listen to an extract from an article published last week in the "West Australian." It is a statement made by the Honorary Minister (Hon. C. F. Baxter) in connection with the operations of the Wyndham Meat Works and deals with last season's output. It is as follows—

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Mr. C. F. Baxter) said yesterday that so far as killing was concerned the Wyndham meatworks had ceased operations on September 15. Owing to the scarcity of refrigerated tonnage the whole season's programme had to be curtailed, and the cattle treated during the season totalled 18,493, which was a considerably smaller number than had been intended. In July 1,000 tons of frozen beef were shipped to London, and a further consignment of frozen beef and other products of the works, approximating 3,000 tons, was now hung up pending the securing of refrigerated space.

People in Western Australia are committed to a huge expenditure in the establishment of these works. I remember well when it was proposed to establish them, and the controversy which occurred at the time. The primary object in establishing those works was to relieve the situation in regard to meat supplies in the metropolitan area and other portions of the State. Although the State has been committed to this vast expenditure,

we find that there are no less than 3,000 tons of prime frozen beef in hand there awaiting shipment overseas, and 1,000 tons were sent from there during last July. These 4,000 tons of beef would average something like three carcasses to the ton, which means 12,000 carcasses of prime frozen beef to be sent away from Australia by the Government at the expense of the consumers of this State.

Mr. Underwood: They are paying £25 for a poor bullock.

Mr. MULLANY: I remember the Premier bitterly attacking the then Premier (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) because he had made no provision for cooling chambers at Fremantle where the frozen meat could be kept for the metropolitan market. Up to the present I have not heard of any effort being made by the present Government to establish these chambers at Fremantle. We cannot wonder that other sections of the community desire to send their products overseas when we find the Government doing this sort of thing. These are matters which require to be placed before the people. I am surprised at the Honorary Minister being so frank in telling the public what the Government are doing with the foodstuffs that are being produced, and which should have been made available for local consumption. This is playing directly into the hands of the local beef producers by keeping up the price of meat. The Premier in his administration of the affairs of State is feeling the effects of these abnormally high prices. The railway men during the last few weeks have been granted an increase, worked out on the cost of living. This will mean an additional expenditure to the Railway Department of something like £310,000 annually in the working of the railways. The Premier must realise that in sending meat supplies overseas he is helping to increase the price of meat to the workers of the State, and that this is operating against his own interests in putting up the costs of the administration of his departments. I do not know that any attempt is being made to overcome this difficulty.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. MULLANY: Are cooling chambers built to assist the growers to make more money, or to give the consumers cheaper meat so that they may not be charged the extortionate prices they have to pay to-day? Wheat is a commodity in which we are perhaps most interested. The Agricultural Department have estimated that the production of wheat this year will be something like 17 million bushels. Last year it was about 13 million bushels. I will discount this amount by two millions, and say that the estimated production is about 15 million bushels.

Mr. Pickering: It is rather too early to form an estimate.

Mr. MULLANY: I was given this estimate of 17 million bushels last night by the Minister for Agriculture, but am taking it to be 15 million bushels. The local consump-

tion, allowing for everything, is something like four million bushels, two millions for gristing, 1,500,000 for seed purposes and 500,000 bushels that should be set aside for local consumption by poultry farmers and pig raisers. These two industries require consideration and the consumption there should be regarded as local consumption. On the estimate of 15 million bushels, this would leave an exportable surplus of 11 million bushels. We have been told that if the farmers are not to get the world's parity for the wheat retained for local consumption they will be called upon to make a sacrifice that they should not have to make in the interests of the general community. I remember that when the Parliamentary trip was arranged by the Premier through the agricultural areas, he announced for the first time that the farmer would be paid 5s. per bushel at siding for his 1919-20 harvest. The farmers were jubilant; this announcement was the success of the trip. It was given out everywhere and greeted with cheers. The farmers said; "This is the finest piece of news we have heard; our immediate future is assured and we can do well on 5s. a bushel."

Mr. Piesse: The cost of production has gone up 25 per cent. since last year.

Mr. MULLANY: I desire to draw attention to the exact wording of the motion and it is that the cost of the production shall be taken into consideration. If the cost of production has gone up since last year undoubtedly the price of wheat to the local consumers and to people overseas has gone up much more. I take the view that the farmers are not being called upon to make an undue sacrifice by releasing this comparatively small quantity of wheat amounting to less than 4 million bushels out of the anticipated harvest of 15 millions. As a matter of fact they should consider that they are fortunate in these times that they are in the position that even if the motion be carried they will be getting a reasonable price for wheat consumed locally and the London parity for their exportable surplus. Another question to which I desire to refer is that of seed wheat. In reply to a question asked the other evening, the Honorary Minister said that the requirements for seed wheat next year would amount to something like 1½ million bushels. Whilst seed wheat should be treated as an item of local consumption it is largely a matter of exchange between established farmers. Many of those established farmers will have their own seed wheat and many will exchange the wheat or they will purchase from each other. There is one section of the farming community, however, who, I think everyone will freely admit we should assist, namely the men now engaged in clearing the land and getting it ready to grow wheat next year. Amongst that section we know that there is a considerable number of returned soldiers. If our wheat growing friends are going to be successful in establishing their claim to the

world's parity for the wheat that they can produce, it will mean that the new farmers whom we propose to be so anxious to see firmly established on the land will be starting their next year's operations by paying 6s. a bushel more for their seed wheat than will the old established farmer. These men have been put on the land—many of them returned soldiers—and there is no doubt if the world's parity is going to be admitted we will handicap those men in comparison to the old established farmers for whom the State has done so much in the past. With regard to the poultry farming and pig raising industries I claim that all sections of the community have interests in common, and the Government have been endeavouring by every possible means to put them on a sound footing.

Mr. Pickering: By promoting egg-laying competitions.

Mr. MULLANY: I believe the hon. member would be an admirable judge of an egg-laying competition. Is the hon. member not aware of the fact that the State has subsidised and assisted in various centres to establish bacon factories? Is he not also aware of the extremely high price that is being charged to poultry farmers and pig raisers to-day for their wheat, and that the price is practically killing the industry? Are the farmers so short sighted that they cannot see this? The member for Sussex who is such a persistent interjector, and who knows what is going on, has never grown a bushel of wheat in his life.

Mr. Pickering: That is wrong.

Mr. MULLANY: Are our farmer friends so blind to everything outside of their own immediate advantage that they cannot realise that this action of theirs is going to be detrimental to the best interests of the progress of the State? Again, we have the question of the returned soldier, the man who perhaps is crippled or is unfit to carry on a laborious occupation, encouraged to take up poultry raising. This man is depending upon a supply of wheat to enable him to carry on operations. If we are to admit the world's parity for wheat, the poultry raising industry will go out of existence. But the farmers do not seem to have any sympathy for the man engaged in poultry raising. They say, "The world's parity is there, we are entitled to get it and we do not care who suffers in the process."

Mr. Picasse: That is not the desire of the farmers.

Mr. MULLANY: Those engaged in the dairying industry are dependent during the summer months, both in the metropolitan area and on the goldfields, upon the by-products of wheat with which to feed their stock. The farmers profess to have the interests of the State at heart, yet they cold-bloodedly and callously say, "We do not care what becomes of the dairying industry, we must get our last pound of flesh." During the forthcoming summer, if these by-products are not available for our dairying stock, particularly on the goldfields and in

many other places, we shall lose children because of the fact that the milk that these children are entitled to get, and which it is essential they should get, will not be there on account of the callousness of the farmers who are saying, "We are going to get the last penny of the world's parity."

Mr. Johnston: That is a shocking statement that no one will believe.

Mr. MULLANY: It is a plain statement of fact.

Mr. Johnston: You cannot prove it.

Mr. MULLANY: It is about time that the people of the State realised that they have done a great deal for the farming community, and the farming community should realise that they are able to get good prices for their exportable surplus. There can be no shadow of doubt, however, that the people who have helped to develop the State are entitled to get a fair and reasonable profit for the commodities which the State produces. I intend to repeat an illustration that I have given before. Take the position of two men who have fought for their country and who have returned; one being a wheat farmer and the other a gold miner. Both those men went to the war with the full sanction of all sections of the community and fought to hold this country for us. Both are now back engaged in their pre-war occupations. What is the position as the result of the war and high prices which prevail? The farmer finds himself better off than he ever dreamt he would be. The miner too is back in his pre-war occupation, but he, on the other hand, finds himself perilously near starvation because the wages he is receiving are not sufficient to keep him and his wife and family in reasonable comfort. Is there any justice in a state of affairs of that kind? Are we worthy to occupy positions as public representatives if we allow that kind of thing to continue? We are producing commodities and everyone in the State has a right to have access to those commodities at a reasonable price. I again desire to speak more particularly to the farming representatives in this House and to ask them—

Mr. Pickering interjected.

Mr. MULLANY: I would not expect the member for Sussex to know very much. I desire to show hon. members that unless they display sufficient public spirit and allow people to have access to the commodities that are required, at a reasonable price, we shall never have industrial peace. It is time that we began to put into operation what we heard so much about at one time, that when the war was over we would have to go believed they were going on wrong lines, so motion is a direct step towards that aim, and if hon. members will take the trouble to read the motion they will see it makes no limitation as to time. If wheat were 3s. a bushel in the overseas markets and if it could be shown that it was costing 5s. to produce it here, the producer of the commodity would be entitled to ask for a fair and reasonable profit on the cost of the production of the commodity. Members of the

Country party, or indeed any other party, must begin to realise that we cannot go on developing this country and have industrial peace if existing conditions are going to be permitted to continue. Some years ago I had occasion to differ from the party with which I had been associated all my life. I believed they were going on wrong lines, so I did not hesitate to take an action which I thought right. Having, to an extent, been associated with the members of the Country party for the last two or three years, I am now going to take an action similar to that which I previously took, the reason being, as before, that I think they are wrong. I do not profess to see a way out quite clearly, but I observe that the Premier and his Ministry appear to be content to sit down and let things drift, in the fond hope that everything will come right. However, it is clear that we cannot get through by such methods. The object of my motion is, not to attack any section of the community, but to endeavour to secure justice for all. Unless something of the sort is done we shall have trouble such as we have never dreamt of, trouble which I trust will be averted.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.16]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

|      |    |    |    |    |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 15 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 20 |

Majority against .. 5

#### AYES.

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Mr. Brown     | Mr. Pickering  |
| Mr. George    | Mr. Piesse     |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Pilkington |
| Mr. Hickmott  | Mr. Thomson    |
| Mr. Johnston  | Mr. Verrard    |
| Mr. Maley     | Mr. Willmott   |
| Mr. Mitchell  | Mr. Hardwick   |
| Mr. Money     | (Teller.)      |

#### NOES.

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin  | Mr. Munsie     |
| Mr. Brown   | Mr. Roche      |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Smith      |
| Mr. Davies  | Mr. Teesdale   |
| Mr. Durack  | Mr. Troy       |
| Mr. Foley   | Mr. Underwood  |
| Mr. Green   | Mr. Willcock   |
| Mr. Hudson  | Mr. Wilson     |
| Mr. Jones   | Mr. O'Loughlin |
| Mr. Lutey   | (Teller.)      |
| Mr. Mullany |                |

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.22]: The hon. member no doubt was actuated by the best intentions when he moved his motion, but the wording of that motion renders it almost impossible to arrive at the cost of the production of wheat. He cited the Australian Dried Fruit Growers' Association as

having controlled the price of dried fruits to the satisfaction of Australian consumers. The hon. member apparently does not realise that that association, of which I am a member, has cornered the local product. If the hon. member will agree to allow the wheat-grower to work on exactly the same methods, the wheat-grower will have no cause for complaint.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What do you mean by cornering the product?

Mr. PIESSE: We regulate the price to the local consumer and sell the surplus overseas. I am now more a farmer than a fruit-grower, and naturally I am concerned as to what will happen in the coming wheat harvest. I say most emphatically that it is not the desire of the farming community to impose London parity on the local consumers. I defy any member to prove a desire on the part of the farmers to bring about such a condition. Take the present pool: the price of wheat for local consumption has been 5s. 9d. and 6s. 9d., and is now 7s. 8d., whereas the world's market value is something like 13s.

Mr. Smith: What about freight and charges?

Mr. PIESSE: The price I quote is the price offered in this State. There are in the country buyers offering 13s. Those buyers, doubtless, could make a profit on that price for a certain portion of the coming harvest. But that would be only a fraction of the harvest, and it would not be to the interests of the farmers to sell to speculators at this stage. The farmers are satisfied with the operations of the Pool, and the majority are quite prepared to pool their wheat once more. I do not know of any meeting of farmers which has stuck out for the overseas market value for local consumption. This is a very great question, and my attempt to secure the adjournment of the debate was made because I realised the importance of the discussion and desired an opportunity to collect figures which might convince members and the country that we stand on ground very different from that which the mover of the motion would have the House believe. Take the I.A.B. farmers: A few evenings ago a question was asked in the House as to the total indebtedness of those farmers to outside creditors. The reply was "£392,000." That is only a fraction of their liabilities. When fixing the price of wheat, the indebtedness of those I.A.B. farmers would have to be taken into consideration, otherwise there would be no possible relief for them from that burden of debt. As for the farmers having no sympathy with the soldier settlers, the hon. member failed to realise that if those soldier settlers get a good price for their wheat this year probably they will be able to liquidate the first cost of their operations.

Mr. Smith: Why did you raise the price of wheat to soldier poultry farmers?

Mr. PIESSE: I do not know whether we are expected to father the whole of the com-

munity, that we should consider every industry dependent on the production of wheat.

Mr. Thomson: Why did you raise the price of the "Sunday Times"?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kataning must keep order.

Mr. PIESSE: Many industries are said to have a claim on the sentiment of the farmers, but they have not so strong a claim as the hon. member would have us believe.

Mr. Smith: Do you not think that the community deserves consideration for having guaranteed the price of wheat to the farmer?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for North Perth must have some consideration for the conduct of business in the House.

Mr. PIESSE: Undoubtedly the community during war time did guarantee the farmer a price that ensured to him a living wage; but it must not be forgotten that the farmer was charged interest on the assistance rendered, and pretty heavy interest at that. I do not propose to go further into this debate, because I have not had sufficient time to collect figures, but I assert that the community have no right to claim from the wheat grower an undue consideration in the matter of the price of wheat. If we have wheat or any other commodity for sale, I claim that we have every right to freedom in the sale of that product. It is left to the board controlling the wheat scheme to fix the price, to enable people to live at less than famine rates, and I am confident that the farmers will not hesitate to extend to the community the consideration due to them. It is nonsense to talk of starving children. I know of my own knowledge people in the farming areas who, up to the present time, have not had sufficient funds to enable them to clothe their children as they should be clothed. I do not infer that the children are clothed in hessian or anything of that kind. They are comfortably and fairly well clothed, but an examination of their homes reveals a great scarcity of clothing. These children are not so well dressed as are those in the city, but one never hears of complaints from the farmers on that score. The farmers are ready to extend due consideration to the consumer and I think that when the price is fixed for the new season's wheat, there will be no cause to complain in so far as the farming section is concerned.

Mr. O'Loughlin: What about one of the Ministers speaking next?

Mr. PICKERING: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. O'Loughlin: No, go on.

Mr. Pickering: Why do not you go on?

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

|              |    |    |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes         | .. | .. | .. | 22 |
| Noes         | .. | .. | .. | 15 |
|              |    |    |    | —  |
| Majority for | .. | .. | .. | 7  |
|              |    |    |    | —  |

# AYES.

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Mr. Broun     | Mr. Pickering  |
| Mr. Draper    | Mr. Piesse     |
| Mr. Durack    | Mr. Pilkington |
| Mr. George    | Mr. Stubbs     |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Teesdale   |
| Mr. Hickmott  | Mr. Thomson    |
| Mr. Johnston  | Mr. Underwood  |
| Mr. Maley     | Mr. Veryard    |
| Mr. Mitchell  | Mr. Willmott   |
| Mr. Money     | Mr. Hardwick   |
| Mr. Muilany   | (Teller.)      |
| Mr. Nairn     |                |

# NOES.

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin  | Mr. Munsie     |
| Mr. Brown   | Mr. Rooke      |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Smith      |
| Mr. Foley   | Mr. Troy       |
| Mr. Green   | Mr. Willcock   |
| Mr. Hudson  | Mr. Wilson     |
| Mr. Jones   | Mr. O'Loughlin |
| Mr. Lutey   | (Teller.)      |

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

## MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT, FINES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [8.36]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the fines inflicted for infringements of the Traffic Act, 1919, which are being paid into Consolidated Revenue, should be paid to the local authority initiating the proceedings, in the same manner as was done under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, and the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act, 1876.

The local authorities who, under the Traffic Act, are agents for the Minister, have to administer the Act and institute proceedings and pay the necessary legal fees and expenses. If they are successful in the prosecution, any expenses incurred are refunded to the local authorities but, if they are unsuccessful, the expense must be borne by the local authorities. The Crown Law Department puts up an absurd contention in these words—

In unjustifiable cases, where it does not receive the costs, the fault lies with the local authority for bringing a case which apparently it was not justified in bringing.

This is the height of absurdity. A case might be lost through any one of a dozen causes, perhaps through a small technical point and yet, in the words of the Under Secretary for Law, the prosecution was unjustifiable and the local authority must foot the bill. Further, the Under Secretary for Law sets out—

It must be borne in mind that the State has to bear the cost not only of the upkeep of the court and the necessary staff, but also of the prisoners. Where a fine is not paid, there is an alternative of imprisonment and the State has to pay for the keep of the prisoner. Logically I ven-

ture to submit that, if the local authorities are to receive the fines in question, then in the event of the fines not being paid, they should pay for the upkeep of the prisoner serving the alternative sentence.

Prior to the passing of the Traffic Act, these fines formed part of the revenue of the local authority.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What local authority?

Mr. Johnston: Each municipality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Municipalities have not had this revenue for years.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Minister now exercises the authority which formerly belonged to the local bodies. Take the Kalgoorlie Council: I noticed by the Kalgoorlie "Miner" the other day that the local council was making a vigorous protest with regard to this matter. A letter was forwarded to the Minister as follows—

This council pays £156 per annum to an inspector to ensure the carrying out of the provisions of the Act and regulations. The fines should be a set off against this expense. It has always been so.

The member for North-East Fremantle denies that. These people ought to know something about it.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I would back the member for North-East Fremantle against them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If they have to find the money, they ought to know more than the hon. member.

The contention of the Under Secretary for Law that if a local authority loses a case, it shows it to have been unjustifiable in taking action is rather an absurd proposition. Further, in regard to his remark that were the local authority to receive the fines, logically in the event of the fines not being paid, it should meet the cost of the alternative sentence of imprisonment, does not apply, as the State bears the expense of keeping the defaulter imprisoned under other Acts administered by the local authority or the State, and even ordinary debtors who fail to obey orders of the court.

The Kalgoorlie Council puts the case very pithily when it states—

The local authority has by the new Act been deprived of a source of revenue which helped to meet the expense of maintaining traffic regulations and undertaking prosecutions, while any fines go to consolidated revenue, a condition that is not approved by this local authority.

The York Council circularised all the local authorities throughout the State, and I have received the following—

From the replies received from the local authorities all over the State, the whole of the country districts are solid in their sup-

port of the protest against fines under this Act being appropriated to consolidated revenue.

Recently I asked the Minister for Works the following question—

Is he aware that, if local governing authorities are forced to bear the expense of instituting prosecutions against offenders, which in some cases may turn out unsuccessful, this will have a tendency to make local authorities refuse to undertake the responsibility of enforcing the Act?

The Minister for Works: What answer did I give to your question?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I shall quote that in a moment. If the local authorities lose a case, they have to stand the racket. Therefore, they are not likely to keep inspectors and go to the trouble and expense of prosecuting if they know that, every time they fail, they will be out of pocket as a result. The Minister answered my question thus—

Should local authorities neglect to enforce the provisions of the Traffic Act as indicated, they will gain nothing thereby.

If they gain nothing, which I neither admit nor deny, they certainly will not have to bear the expense of unsuccessful prosecutions. The Minister went on to say—

As, however, they received all fees for the licensing of vehicles and drivers, and these if regularly collected from all vehicle owners must help considerably in making and maintaining roads, it is considered not unreasonable for them to carry out the provisions of the Act.

The reply of the York council to this is worth listening to—

When it is considered that these fines under the various Acts (or parts affected) which the Traffic Act has superseded, were payable to local authorities. For instance, under the by-laws governing motor traffic, lights, etc., under the Municipal Corporations Act, and under the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act (which has now been incorporated in the Traffic Act), fines recovered in prosecutions by the local authority were always paid to the local authority. The offences are still the same and the local authority takes the risk of prosecutions; but because the Minister is nominally charged with the administration of the new Act, the fines are filched from the local authority.

The Minister for Works: We improve as we go on.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The letter of the York council continues—

I should hardly think local authorities, when they realise this "heads you win tails, I lose" policy, are likely to provide salaries for traffic inspectors, legal expenses, etc., for no benefit to themselves. The fact that the fees for cart, carriage and other licenses are paid to local authorities has nothing to do with the question, as these have always been so paid, and quite properly, seeing that the local



authority bears the cost of the upkeep of the roads, in municipalities at least.

If we turn up the regulations and see the manual of the Law relating to road districts, on page 16, Regulations Nos. 132 to 144, we find that many things are brought under the Act. There used to be certain fines which provided a certain amount of revenue, but the whole of this sum now goes into Consolidated Revenue. I was present in York the other day when the police made a statement in regard to a certain individual, and informed the Town Clerk that he must take action. On the information of the police the action no doubt was taken. There might be every ground for believing that a conviction will result, but should the case be lost on a technical point, it is not justice that the accredited agent of the Minister should have brought the case forward. No doubt the Minister will admit that even the metropolitan and suburban local authorities are not satisfied. I have a cutting here taken from the Press during the last three or four days, concerning a meeting of metropolitan and suburban municipal bodies. These are trying to arrange a deputation to the Minister for Works in regard to the collection of fines and other matters. I presume they will deal with the same matter that I am now dealing with. If these bodies are discontented with all the contributions they receive in connection with the main roads running through their districts, in how much worse a position are the country local authorities who get no such aid? The country municipalities are having great difficulty in making ends meet. They will not pay for inspectors and go to the expense and annoyance of instituting prosecutions if, when they happen to be unsuccessful, they are told that their action was unjustified and that they will have to bear the cost of it. They will not agree to bear the cost, or to take unnecessary risk. I ask the House to support this motion. It affects country and goldfields districts equally. These local governing bodies are doing the same service now as they were before, only they are working as agents for the Minister. These fines are all going into Consolidated Revenue. The local authorities will not worry their brains about prosecutions when, in the event of their being unsuccessful, they are called upon to pay the piper.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.53]: I did not anticipate that this motion would come on to-night, and I am at a disadvantage in that I have not the notes with me that have been prepared. The hon. member is within his rights in bringing this matter forward. It seems to me extraordinary, however, that a protest, which started first in the Kalgoorlie council, and went on to other goldfields towns, should finally have drifted to the far-famed city of York and now be brought forward as a motion by the

member for that district. All these different local bodies like to handle as much revenue as they can get.

Mr. Griffiths: They do not get much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government used to subsidise municipalities but have ceased to do so. My experience is that whenever there is a chance for these local authorities to grab funds they do so. The ruling on which we are working to-day is one which emanates from the Crown Law Department. When the question was first broached by the Kalgoorlie municipal council I set out the position, as it appeared to me, for the Crown Law Department, and their ruling is that which has been read out by the hon. member this evening, namely, that with regard to these fines and penalties, they go into the revenue of the department which has to bear all the costs and expenses in cases of prosecution.

Mr. Hudson: In cases of failure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Crown Law Department and the allied departments have to bear the expenses in connection with the establishment of our police courts, our stipendiary magistrates, the upkeep of the police and gaols, and the feeding of prisoners, running into a considerable amount of money. When an offence has been committed and the prosecution is successful, if the defendant either has not the means, or is averse to paying, the penalty is that he goes to gaol. While he is in gaol he is putting the country to expense which has to be borne by the department concerned.

Mr. Hudson: What about the expense of the prosecution in such a case?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no experience of prosecutions.

Mr. Hudson: But does your department pay or not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We do not pay because we get nothing out of it. The Crown Law Department can best answer that question. If the prosecution is successful and the costs are paid, the prosecutor receives the costs. If the costs are not paid and the defendant goes to gaol, I expect the prosecutor has to whistle for his money.

Mr. Hudson: If the prosecution fails, who pays the costs?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I expect the prosecutor would have to whistle for his money.

Mr. Hudson: Your department takes the costs when you win and the local authority the responsibility when it loses?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: My department does not take one penny.

Mr. Hudson: You do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It goes into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Hudson: That is only a quibble.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity of refuting the Minister's statements.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am only giving the statements supplied by the

Crown Law Department. If the hon. member can show that the attitude of that department is unjust and unfair, he may rely upon it that the Minister will see that the matter is placed upon a proper basis. The Government have no desire that any injustice should be done.

Mr. Hudson: The member for York put a proposition to you which you are avoiding.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not trying to avoid anything. The hon. member must know when the Crown Law Department give their interpretation of an Act, and state what the procedure is, the Minister can hardly go against them. The question is not entirely settled, for I am still awaiting a reply from the Crown Law Department in connection with the matter. Whether it is that the hon. member's constituents are tired of waiting, or whether they have shown him that he has an opportunity of getting into the limelight in connection with a case of this sort by throwing dust and dirt upon the Minister, I do not know. But I do think the motion is an attempt to get into the limelight, instead of allowing a case of this sort to be gone into, as it is being gone into, carefully and fairly. The hon. member has seized the opportunity to pose before the public as the mighty defender of the rights of municipalities. He appeals to the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) to assist him in this matter; and yet I suppose that on the previous question he would be at daggers drawn with that hon. member.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is perfectly understandable. They might agree on one question and differ on another.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not know that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I did not think you did, from the way you spoke.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At any rate, not being a lawyer I can give no further explanation. I can only tell the House that so far as I am concerned the matter is not ended, but may still be described as sub judice. In other words, the Crown Law Department have not yet replied to a memorandum I sent them some short time ago asking for this question to be considered again in order to see whether the points raised by the Kalgoorlie municipal council on the advice of their solicitors hold water or do not hold water.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.3]: I hold, with the Minister, that the fines should go to the State. The State has to meet the expense of upkeep of courts from one year's end to the other, and the fines are all the State receives towards the upkeep of the courts. In my opinion there would not have been half the prosecutions under the Traffic Act in the city of Perth formerly had it not been for the fines. But for the fines we would not have seen doctors prosecuted for letting their motor-cars stand in front of patients' houses. To me it seems unreasonable on the part of the

local authorities to expect that the State shall pay the upkeep of magistrates and police and the Crown Law Department if the State is not to receive the fines imposed under the Traffic Act. Why should these fines go to the local authorities, who do not contribute one penny towards the expense of administering the Act?

Mr. Griffiths: Do you think it right that the local authorities should stand the racket when prosecutions are unsuccessful?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The local authorities have to run the same risk in that respect as a private person.

Mr. Griffiths: Do you think that the existing position of affairs tends towards the enforcement of the Act?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The existing state of affairs will prevent the local authorities from bringing frivolous cases before the courts, as they have frequently done.

Mr. Griffiths: It will have the effect of stopping the administration of the Act altogether.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If that is right, the local authorities are not fit to have charge of the administration of an Act, or charge of a district. If the local authorities were now rating up to the maximum allowed to them, they would not be short of funds. But they will not rate up to the maximum, or anything near it. Consequently, they are short of funds for carrying on the work of their municipalities and districts. This is not the first time the question of the disposal of fines has come up in this House. I introduced a Bill dealing with the subject some years ago. In the prosecutions undertaken by local authorities the person principally concerned in the prosecution is nine times out of ten a member of the police force; so that such a prosecution does not cost the local authority one penny. In many cases, moreover, the only person attending the court on behalf of the local authority is the clerk to the local authority. In very few cases does a solicitor appear on behalf of a local authority. Indeed, a solicitor appears only when it is a good case from the point of view of returning a few shillings to the solicitor. On the face of it, it is ridiculous to expect that the Crown should maintain the courts and the police and all the paraphernalia of the law, and that the fines should go to someone else. If the local authorities have genuine cases to bring forward, their expenses are paid. The Minister for Works has all the work of the administration of the Act. An attempt was made to limit the operation of the Act to the metropolitan area. But that proposal did not meet with favour from hon. members. They said, "No, we will not have this. The Minister and the police shall control the traffic throughout the State." Is it not only right and fair that when the Crown bear the cost of administering an Act of Parliament, and any person violates that Act and is fined, the fine should go to the Crown?

Mr. Hudson: But does not the Minister delegate some of his powers under the Act?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister can appoint town clerks and road board secretaries inspectors under the Act. But every police constable is an inspector under the Act, and the police do the bulk of the work connected with the measure. As you yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are aware, outside the city of Perth the police used to do the bulk of the work prior to the present Act coming into force. It was the police who used to take the names of persons who offended against traffic legislation. There was never a town clerk or a road board secretary available to take the name of a person driving at night without a light. My experience of the inspectors of local authorities was that they were men who looked for cases when in the public interest they should have shut their eyes. I myself was once caught by one of them. However, that is by the way. I yield to no one in the House as regards the desire that all funds that are justly due to local authorities should reach them; but I think the action of the Minister has been correct in this case. The Minister has not claimed anything that does not belong to him.

Mr. Hudson: But a good deal of the work is thrown upon the local authorities without their getting any compensation, apparently.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The local authorities do very little.

Mr. Thomson: At any rate, they have to issue the summonses.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not necessarily. The policeman does that in nine cases out of ten. It has been a God-send to the local authorities to be relieved of the expense of employing inspectors to control the traffic.

Mr. Hudson: You are speaking as a metropolitan member.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In the outside districts there were no inspectors to do that work. The police had to do it, and the State got nothing for it. But now the police do it and the State gets the revenue in the shape of the fines. That is why the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) is squealing. I hope the Minister will stand to his guns and insist on getting what is justly due to the State to enable it to carry out the administration of the Traffic Act.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [9-13]: I sincerely hope that in this instance the Minister for Works will abandon his guns and comply with the request put forward. I consider that the member for York is to be commended for having brought forward this matter at the present juncture.

Mr. Griffiths: But the Minister says I am only getting into the limelight.

Mr. LUTEY: Ministers are liable to say that sort of thing. As regards the argument of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) that the Government take the necessary action, I can only say that that is not so far as Kalgoorlie is concerned. An inspector is necessary to look after the traffic in Kalgoorlie. If it is correct that the Government do practically the whole of the work under the Act, why does the Act provide that if a traffic inspector is appointed by a local authority

he must wear his badge in a conspicuous place, and why does the Act say, "The badge is to be as follows," and then give a design of the badge?

The Minister for Works: But the local authorities get all the license fees.

Mr. LUTEY: That provision in the Act goes to show that the local governing bodies are responsible for the administration of the Traffic Act, and that they have to appoint inspectors for that purpose. It is done in Kalgoorlie at the present time.

The Minister for Works: But the local governing authorities get the fees to meet their expenses.

Mr. LUTEY: When the local governing authorities initiate prosecutions, they should receive the fines. If a local authority loses a case, the Government, instead of paying the expenses of the prosecution, leave the authority to bear them. On the face of it it looks like a just request, and on behalf of the Kalgoorlie bodies I contend they should get the fines which are inflicted for breaches of traffic.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [9-17]: As a representative of a country constituency, my experience is practically similar to that of the hon. member who has just spoken. In Geraldton an inspector was appointed when the Act came into force, and during the first month or so after the Act came into existence there were numerous prosecutions, and in that time the traffic was carried on perfectly. But when the local authority failed in a prosecution and found that they were mulct in costs, they began to drop the interest they had started to take in the new law, and things drifted to the condition they were in before the Act came into force.

The Minister for Works: Do you know that the local authorities have not had these fines since 1909, and that there is an Act in force which says that they are not to have them?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know that the local bodies expected they would get the fines, because they became very active when the law came into force. Proceedings were taken in many cases and the traffic became well regulated. But soon afterwards matters drifted again. I understood that the police were going to be responsible for these prosecutions. If that had been the case, the costs of the unsuccessful prosecutions would have been borne by the Crown Law Department.

The Minister for Works: The authorities want to be paid to do their duty.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am just quoting what has actually happened. If the Government desire the Act to be properly administered by the local authorities they must give those authorities some incentive, either by saying that the unsuccessful prosecutions will be paid for, or else they may take the whole of the fines that are imposed.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [9-20]: I cannot let the occasion pass without trying to impress upon the Minister the one unjust point in regard to the matter. In Kalgoorlie there is a special officer who receives a salary of £156 to carry on these prosecutions, but if he is not to conduct prosecutions under the Traffic Act, that Act

might just as well not be on the statute book. In some districts they have special inspectors to do the work. It seems to be a case with the Government of "heads I win, tails you lose." If prosecutions fail the local authorities have to stand the cost, and if the prosecutions are successful the Government take the fines.

The Minister for Works: We do not take the whole of the money. I am informed that the prosecutor gets his costs, but not when the case is lost.

Mr. GREEN: Where do the councils come in if they lose a case? If they win they do not get anything. Is that fair? I trust the Minister will see his way clear to arrange that a portion of the fines that are inflicted may go to the local authorities. The Government receive a big revenue from the goldfields districts through the totalisator and other sources, and we know also that most of the municipalities are pretty hard up, though that is not the case with Kalgoorlie.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT, TO AMEND.

Debate resumed from 1st September on motion by Mr. Green—

"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to amend the Shearers' Accommodation Act, 1912."

The PREMIER (Hon. J. MITCHELL—Northam) [9.25]: I listened very attentively to the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie when he introduced the motion. He asked that the Shearers' Accommodation Act of 1912 be amended, although he admitted that the pastoralists, so far as he knew, were obeying the law. True, he said that it took about three years to catch anyone who tried to evade the law, but I myself believe that it is being observed.

Mr. O'Loughlin: We want it extended.

The PREMIER: I do not know that there is any need to extend the Act.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Of course there is.

Mr. Green: They are making provision for extending it in the other States, and we do not want to be behind them.

The PREMIER: I want to know how far it is being extended. The hon. member said the Queensland Act was the nearest to being perfect.

Mr. Green: The New Zealand Act is not bad either.

The PREMIER: New Zealand is a small country which is very well developed, and the climate of New Zealand cannot be compared to that of Western Australia.

Mr. Green: Ours is a far better climate than that of Queensland.

The PREMIER: For many years we were without any Act at all. It is only since 1912 that the station owners are being compelled to provide accommodation. I am glad to know that they have provided it.

Mr. Willock: There is a lot of dissatisfaction.

The PREMIER: There always will be dissatisfaction. Even we are dissatisfied with the accommodation which is provided for us here.

If we are to amend the law we should have good reason for doing so.

Mr. Teesdale: In some places the accommodation provided for the shearers is better than that which the employers themselves have.

Mr. Green: Well, why do not the pastoralists take the shearers' huts and let the shearers have the homesteads?

The PREMIER: I do not contend that the housing of the people on the land is all that it should be. Many of our agriculturists who went out ten years ago are only just now building suitable houses for themselves. That kind of thing is inevitable in connection with pioneering. All that is being changed now, and wherever one goes comfortable homes are seen to be erected or in course of erection. If we are to extend the provisions of the Act we must know just why we are to extend them. It is the usual thing for these men to be accommodated in tents. We know that on clearing jobs the men engaged on the work live in tents.

Mr. Green: Then let them supply tents.

The PREMIER: I was in the back country the other day, and I saw people who had nice homes but who elected to sleep in tents.

Mr. Green: The Act provides for tents.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not pretend that much had been left undone by the farmers which should have been done.

Mr. Green: But I say bring them all into line.

The PREMIER: He certainly asked that the Act should be made to apply to farmers. It would not affect them very much. If the hon. member asked for an inquiry, there might be something in it. I am sure he does not want to do an injustice to any section of the people. Neither do I. I should like to see everybody well housed.

Mr. Green: Then why not make provision for their proper housing?

Mr. Teesdale: What are the inspectors doing?

The PREMIER: The inspectors have nothing to do with the agricultural areas. I should say that for the most part the comparatively few men employed on the farms are well provided for. I know that the hon. member would like to see the Act made to apply to all classes of work, but I doubt if that is practicable. The sawmills, for instance, provide adequate accommodation for their men, and so, too, do the meat works and other industries. I do not see that much more can be done. I suggest that the hon. member be content with a promise that the matter shall be inquired into. We shall get reports and will then know how far it is necessary to go. The country is in its developmental stage, and men of small means cannot afford to put up costly accommodation. If on inquiry it is found that the housing provided is not satisfactory, something will be done. A great many men in the country object to sleeping under shelter, just as a great many other men, no matter what their age, object to going to the Old Men's Home. I have often wondered whether it would not be better to provide small places in the country where such old men could end their days in peace, instead of entering the Old Men's Home. However, the hon. member has called my attention to the fact that the Act has been made to apply in other places.

I will have inquiries made, and, if necessary, will introduce legislation next session.

Mr. Green: Will you be here then?

The PREMIER: If I am not here, no doubt my friend, the member for Pilbara, who will be occupying this seat, will fulfil my promise. However, I think it would be only reasonable if the hon. member adopted my suggestion for an inquiry.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [9.35]: I trust the hon. member will not accept the suggestion of the Premier to hold this matter over while inquiries are made.

The Premier: You will not get any more.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Premier threatens that we shall not get any more, at any rate that will not prevent our trying for more. I have very little knowledge of the operation of the Act in the North-West, but from the evidence submitted by the mover of the motion it has been fairly satisfactory, and therefore I am not interested in that phase of the question. But I desire an extension of the principle to embrace other industries. The Premier has contended that as Western Australia is in the pioneering stage, it is wrong to impose those conditions.

The Premier: The goldfields are the worst offenders.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I admit that on the goldfields, from the very nature of the industry, it may not be possible always to have an elaborate scheme of housing accommodation. Still ordinary decent comfort ought to be observed both there and in the agricultural areas.

The Colonial Secretary: So it is wherever they can afford it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The whole outlook of the Colonial Secretary is controlled by the question of whether we can afford it. This country may not be able to afford its huge educational vote; yet it is incurred. This country may not be able to afford the erection of State batteries to develop new mining fields; yet that expenditure is both warranted and endorsed.

Mr. Thomson: You have the general taxpayer to fall back upon there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member puts up the view that the taxpayer will be obliged to foot the bill, let me give him a concrete instance. The evidence was sworn in the Arbitration Court a few months ago. I refer to the timber settlements, which are far beyond the pioneering stage.

The Premier: You have good houses there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: At the bush landings to-day will be found the most shocking housing accommodation which exists in any part of Australia. There human beings have to live and rear their families in shacks that are a disgrace to civilisation.

The Colonial Secretary: The bush landings are not permanent.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But is that to prevent Parliament from insisting that the employers, who are extracting the toil out of their employees, shall have at any rate some regard for the constitution and frames and health and comfort of the men and women doing the work?

Mr. Underwood: Why wish to bring all these under the Shearers' Hut Accommodation Act?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We are considering the Shearers' Hut Accommodation Act, but if the Premier will introduce the desired Bill, it will be a comparatively easy matter to extend the title of the Bill to embrace those industries which it is required shall be dealt with by legislation. The hon. member is mighty clever in suggesting that this could not be done because of the title of the Statute. The Premier ranged over the whole of the agricultural industry, which I admit is in the pioneering stage. Many of the settlers have lived under primitive conditions while building up and improving their holdings. I hope that as time goes on they will get out of that poverty stricken state and provide themselves with decent homes. But there is this difference in the respective view-points of the farmer and of the people I represent: The farmer, even if he has to put up with hard conditions, knows that at any rate he is constructing an asset which is going to provide him with a competence.

The Minister for Works: Frequently with an overdraft.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That it should develop into a competence is the history of the agricultural industry throughout Australia. To-day that industry is in a fairly flourishing condition, and most of those who have embarked in it have made good. But that does not apply to the wage earner, who for twenty years of his life down the South-West, in the blinding heat of summer and in the heavy winter rains, is obliged to put up with accommodation not fit to shelter pigs. I make that definite statement, and if the Premier wants the sworn evidence of men and women in the Arbitration Court as to the miserable housing with which they are provided, he can have it. It will serve to show him how much the employers care about the comfort or convenience of the workers.

The Minister for Works: Where does that apply?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It applies particularly to the Jarrahdale landing not 35 miles from Perth. There the Minister can see the most shocking housing accommodation imaginable. There is, I admit, a difficulty in remedying it, but that difficulty is not insurmountable. If the law prescribed that the employer had to provide huts out of the waste timber, it could be done. It has been done at the Mornington Mills. But at the Jarrahdale landing, which the Minister once managed, no regard whatever is paid to the comfort of the men and women and children in that locality. Neither the boarding houses nor the private residences are fit for anyone to live in.

The Minister for Works: But I have seen some fine houses down there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, at the head station. I admit that they could not go in for elaborate housing where they have to keep on moving along every six months; but a very great improvement could be effected in the existing conditions. The Education Department, where they provided schools in that locality, built them on too elaborate a design, with the result that a dead loss was sustained. I put up a suggestion to the Works Department which

was adopted in some places. Under that suggestion a hut was placed on a railway truck which was then shunted on to a side line, and there the children went to school. But after a time the children became too numerous.

The Premier: We cannot have too many children.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You are certainly not encouraging them by the accommodation provided. Huts are provided for half a dozen people, but the rest have to put up with conditions which are not creditable to Western Australia. My object in speaking is to impress upon the Premier the necessity for bringing in an amending Bill.

Mr. Underwood: Give us another Act.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then give us another Act to please the hon. member, who appears to take up that dictatorial attitude that anything suggested by another member is worthless since it does not emanate from his own brilliant brain. I am not worried about the title of the Act. The question is, will the Premier bring in another Bill?

Mr. Underwood interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Forrest has the floor.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I thank you, Sir, for insisting upon a little order and control. What prompted the mover of the motion to seek a discussion in Parliament, to be followed by subsequent action, was that it would be easier to concentrate discussion on an Act already in operation, but probably imperfect in its operations, than to bring forward a request for comparatively new legislation.

Mr. Green: And the proposals in the original measure included what I am asking for now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In 1912 Mr. McDonald asked the House to pass the Bill. It was quite a new subject of legislation. No one had any idea of how it would work in this State because nothing of the kind had ever before been applied. The object was to make it a comprehensive measure, but so strong a claim was made that in the climatic conditions existing in the North it was necessary to take immediate steps to secure the provision of the requisite accommodation that the Bill was passed in its amended form. I am not raising any objection to the operation of the Act further than to point out, as I pointed out in 1912, the necessity for extending it, not to apply all over the State, because, as the Premier has pointed out, it might not be practicable in all cases, but if evidence is adduced that better housing accommodation is required, and that the employers in a profitable industry, long since past the pioneering stage, are doing well enough to provide it, they should by Act of Parliament be compelled to desist from their callous attitude and to provide decent accommodation for the men and women who are carrying on production in this State.

Mr. Teesdale: Could not it be applied to particular districts?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It could be proclaimed to operate in certain localities. I consider that an Act of this description should apply to the South-West.

Mr. Underwood: A Shearers' Act to apply to sawmillers!

Mr. Green: It is a matter of workers' accommodation.

Mr. Munsie: An extension of the Shearers' Act to apply to other workers.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The member for Pilbara knows well enough that its provisions should be applied to other industries.

Mr. Green: The member for Pilbara moved to include agricultural labourers when Mr. McDonald's measure was before the House.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, he had his wits about him in those days, but to-day he makes a mouthful of the argument that the title is wrong. He infers that because of the title we cannot legislate for other workers. Members will realise what the mover of the motion desires, and the motion should not be defeated on the score that the title would not permit of the inclusion of other workers. All that the mover of the motion seeks is that the Premier will introduce a Bill on the lines indicated. The Premier says he is not prepared to do that, but wishes to make some inquiries.

The Premier: You have given me some information now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I suggest that the Premier should introduce a Bill this session while he has the time and the opportunity. A select committee could very soon procure sufficient evidence to warrant passing the measure and applying it to certain localities.

The Premier: We had better go down and inspect those mills.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have already given the Premier an invitation. At the first week-end that he has free, I shall be prepared to take him to the homes to which I refer, and no words of mine will be necessary to prompt him to introduce a measure to remedy the existing conditions.

Mr. Nairn: He promised you to go.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, but the Premier never keeps his promises.

Mr. Chesson: He promised to get you a wife.

The Premier: You did not tell me on what day we should go.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier is a busy man and it is for him to name a convenient time. The trouble is that the Premier makes promises and has not the slightest idea of keeping them. Twelve months ago indignation meetings were held at Donnybrook and the Premier promised to go down.

The Premier: I have been there on three occasions.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier went there and hopped away again as soon as he could. The Premier is too busy; he is too much engrossed in agriculture to attend to other requirements of the State. He takes it for granted that many propositions are brought forward merely out of opposition.

The Minister for Works: What about the shearers' hut accommodation?

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is a good while since the Minister for Works started shearing and he has been very successful, too; he has had a few lambs in his time. I put it to the Premier that he should not oppose this motion but should permit it to be carried. If, in the wisdom of the House, a measure with a different title could be introduced—a comprehensive measure such as I

have indicated—it could be followed by action by the Government. If the Government do not desire to take such action, we are not in a position to compel them to do so. We members in Opposition have only a relatively small party but, relying on the member for Pilbara, who was a splendid champion of the previous measure, and three or four other members whom he might succeed in influencing to support us, we might be able to get a measure before the House. A Bill is necessary, and I hope the Premier will seek the information to which I have referred. I will provide the information for him. I will produce sufficient information by mid-day tomorrow—sworn evidence from the Arbitration Court—

Mr. Underwood: It is not worth anything.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is worth as much as the grunt that comes from the boorish gentleman who interjected. I cannot understand what is wrong with the hon. member lately.

Mr. Green: Swelled head.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Swelled head! His head could not swell; there is nothing in it to force the skull outwards. Since he has been dropped by every party—he was an acquisition to none and a credit to none—he is so disgruntled that he cannot regard with favour any proposition submitted to the House. His colleagues on both sides of the House dropped him and dropped him very quickly. They would have dropped him much more quickly but there was a railway pass attaching to it, and he wanted to fill out his time in order to qualify for it.

Mr. Underwood: Well, they made something out of me.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They made nothing out of the hon. member; I am sure he was not a commercial proposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must discuss the motion.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: My remarks may not have much to do with the motion, but the hon. member is continually interjecting.

Mr. Hudson: I am not continually interjecting.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not speaking to the member for Yilgarn. The unanimity with which the members of this little group stick to each other is really marvellous. If an Act of this description is absolutely required in other industries than the pastoral industry, and if those industries have progressed beyond the pioneering stage, then Parliament is warranted in introducing a Bill to compel employers to provide the requisite accommodation. It is not a question of employers being able to afford to provide it. The timber industry is enjoying an era of prosperity which has never been equalled in its history. We do not know how long it will last, but I do not think the industry will again look back. A fabulous price is being obtained for timber.

Mr. Smith: They could cut the timber cheaply enough, I expect.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The position was that timber was remarkably cheap because there was no outlet for the scantling. The companies were almost giving it away in order to get it off the skids. Face cuts could be purchased practically for a song.

The Premier: Not now.

The Minister for Works: Not during the last three or four years.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, six months ago. My brother purchased a truck load of very good face cuts for £10, and with them he built a very good structure.

Mr. Thomson: He must have had a pal to put him on the track.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Owing to the increased price of timber, it has become a different proposition, because almost every scrap of scantling is now being utilised. The meat works in Chicago are said to can every part of the pig except the squeak.

Mr. Underwood interjected.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member had been there, he would have been transported to the Old Country in a tin long before this.

Mr. Underwood: They would not get you at all, because you would be all squeal.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If it came to a competition of that kind I know who would be in the greater demand. I have no desire to further refer to the porker who essayed to pull Western Australia out of its difficulties. Fortunately we have not many such members in this Parliament. I hope the Premier will agree to extend the measure and that he will undertake, during the next couple of days, to secure that evidence which the member for Pilbara said is worthless but which I assert will warrant him in introducing a Bill, because Parliament is the only authority which can compel employers to provide proper accommodation for their employees. The Public Works Departments in most of the States do provide ample housing for their employees, and I do not see why private employers should be exempt. I hope that the member who moved the motion will persist in his efforts to secure an amendment of the existing Act at the earliest possible date.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [9-55]: I do not intend to discuss the motion to any extent but, for some years, I have realised that the Shearers' Accommodation Act required amending. It requires amending to compel sheep owners to provide the accommodation which is stipulated in the Act itself. I am not opposed in the slightest degree to accommodation being provided for the employees in other industries, but I do not see how provision for accommodation for timber cutters can come under a Shearers' Accommodation Bill.

Mr. Green: In the legislation in the Eastern States they are all grouped together.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am speaking on behalf of the shearers, and I know what I am speaking about. I had the privilege of endeavouring to administer this Act, and the adviser—all Ministers have their advisers—informed me that there were two or three sections which required to be amended before it would be possible to successfully prosecute those sheep owners who had not provided the requisite accommodation.

Mr. Green: That is the point.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is correct. I am solidly supporting the motion that the Shearers' Accommodation Act should be amended to bring it into such a state that it will have legal force, which force it does not possess today. But it is sought to graft other things on to this legislation. It is only right to this House

and to the country that the question of accommodation for employees in other industries should not be tacked on to the Shearers' Accommodation Act. I wish to see the Shearers' Accommodation Act amended on behalf of the shearers; I do not wish to see it amended to provide for the timber workers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You did at one time.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Never under this Act. This Act stands on its own. I have no opposition to offer to anything that the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) has advocated with regard to providing accommodation for timber workers, but why tack it on to the Shearers' Act?

Mr. Green: Agricultural labourers should be included.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Agricultural labourers were included eight years ago. The member for Kalgoorlie does not require to be told that. Many people who were at that time and some of whom still are working in the agricultural areas, did not possess for themselves the accommodation to which a shearers is entitled under this Act.

Mr. Green: No, but they have got it now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They have not got it now.

Mr. Green: The motion will give it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: People who were settlers in that area lived under harder conditions than any wages men ever lived under.

Mr. Green: That is so.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then why all this loud talk from the member for Forrest?

Mr. O'Loughlen: I have as much right to talk as you have.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I trust the Government will introduce a Bill to amend the Shearers' Accommodation Act so that there may be applied legally that which was intended to be applied when the Act was passed. If there is any request for accommodation in other industries I shall be pleased to support any Bill that will give it, but other industries cannot be included in the Shearers' Accommodation Act. The amendments required are very small. The Act has been of considerable service. The great majority of sheep owners or squatters have built their premises in accordance with the requirements of the Act. There are one or two—and these are the men for whom legislation is always required—who have not complied with the Act, and there is no power contained in it to compel them to do so. The decent fellows have complied with it, but those who are not decent fellows have neglected to do so, hence the need for an amendment of the Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray—Wellington) [10.3]: I have carefully read the speech of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) and congratulate him on the temperate manner in which he dealt with the question. He admits that the bulk of the pastoralists are acting decently towards their employees.

Mr. Underwood: Fully 90 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One gathers from the hon. member's speech that what has been done is of such value that he desires to extend the operations of the Act to other industries, which years ago it was attempted to

bring under the Act, but then it was found impossible to do so. He wants the Act to apply even where only one shearers is employed. I do not think that any one member would deny that where it is possible to give good accommodation it is in the interests of the employer that he should give it. The actions of the employers themselves point to this. The hon. member mentioned various industries to which he desired the Act to apply. He indicated the meat works at Wyndham, for instance. Part of the expenditure incurred by the Government in these works was in providing accommodation for the men employed there. If, and when, it is found necessary to extend the accommodation it will be extended, and with no niggardly hand.

Mr. Green: The same thing applies to Carnarvon.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But that is not a Government undertaking. The member for Forrest knows that the big saw mills in the State, such as Millars and the State Mills, provide good accommodation both for married men and bachelors. The charge made to those who occupy the houses is reasonable and has not been complained of. Years ago, when I had to do with Jarrahdale, an undertaking which had been bankrupt on five occasions, the men had to provide their own homes and build them out of the timber allowed from the mills.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is the custom to day.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although the accommodation was not very fine, taking it all round the men had a fairly good time of it. They reared fine families, the sons of whom are now working in the timber industry. It is difficult to arrange for accommodation on bush landings. Frequently a line is run into a forest, and in three or four months' time has to be moved because the forest is cut out. State Saw mills are now considering whether some provision for accommodation could not be made within the means of the undertaking concerned. The manager of the State Saw Mills has under consideration designs for portable houses, which can be moved to meet the conditions mentioned by the hon. member. Most of the employers, who employ labour in the country, know that it is better to give good accommodation to their men, because this enables the men to conserve their energies in the direction of giving better work to their employers. At the State Brickworks we have erected during the last two or three years accommodation for married men and for bachelors, and a boarding house is now going up. Since that accommodation has been provided the work has improved and the financial results have been good. Plans are also being got out for similar accommodation at the State Quarry. Whether the Bill is passed or not the State will be found to be doing its best for its employees. The main difficulty is in connection with workers on railway construction. My experience has shown me that it is difficult to provide accommodation in those cases other than by way of tents.

Mr. Smith: The Commonwealth Railways solved the problem.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They wasted millions of money in the construction of their line, and did not waste any of it on accommodation given to the men, or on the hon. member



either. The very nature of the work of these men on construction is such that their camps have constantly to be moved, and it would be difficult to erect anything in the shape of permanent buildings for them. The Premier does not break promises as the member for Forrest has suggested. His time is well occupied.

Mr. O'Loghlen: He would say the same about you.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The hon. member has remained a bachelor and has only himself to think of, whereas the Premier has not only his household affairs to look after, but a tremendous amount of State work as well. Had the hon. member wished the Premier to accompany him I am quite sure it could have been arranged if he had seen the Premier about it. The House may depend upon it that action will be taken in accordance with the judgment of the Premier. I think the debate will have done some good. It has dealt with one aspect of the conditions of the working man, who, the employers have found out, must be looked after. The difficulty is, as stated by previous speakers, in connection with the struggling farmer, who has but little capital and only his own strength to rely upon. To force upon him all the conditions laid upon him in the Shearers' Accommodation Act will be asking him to do something more than he can afford to do. I do not think it will be necessary to force the matter in this direction in the way that has been indicated. The South-West farmer has a very hard time. Some of them are doing well, and others will do better in the future. They have to live a long time down there before they can see any results of their labours. The winters are severe, although this may be said to be one reason why better accommodation should be provided for the employees. If it is found that the workers are given accommodation as good as that enjoyed by the employers, and that the latter cannot afford to give any better accommodation, I am sure the House will not penalise the farmers by insisting that they should do that which they cannot afford to do. If the House did insist upon this the small farmer would not be able to employ labour, or be able to put forth the best of his energies in developing his holding. Taking the employers right through I am satisfied that they look after their men well as far as their means will permit.

On motion by Mr. Teesdale debate adjourned.

#### BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES SINKING FUNDS.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 30th September, 1920.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

#### PAPERS—MR. MCGIBBON AND THE WHEAT BOARD.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.34]: I move—

That there be laid on the Table of the House all papers relating to the appointment of Mr. S. J. McGibbon to the Australian Wheat Board and to the dispensing with Mr. McGibbon's services.

I look upon this motion as almost formal, and I hope the Honorary Minister will not raise any objection to it. On that assumption I shall make my remarks brief. Let me call to mind a statement made in this House giving the reasons why Mr. McGibbon's services as representative of the West Australian growers on the Australian Wheat Board were dispensed with. There was one point in particular at issue between the Honorary Minister and Mr. McGibbon. In my opinion it is the points at issue between the Honorary Minister and Mr. McGibbon that the people interested want to see cleared up, and the only means of clearing them up is by having access to the papers. The statements of the Honorary Minister and of Mr. McGibbon on the same matters are strongly in conflict. Mr. McGibbon and the Honorary Minister seem to put quite different interpretations on the same matters. Mr. McGibbon was appointed as representative of the West Australian wheat growers by the Honorary Minister. On or about the 2nd April, 1919, the Honorary Minister stated that Mr. McGibbon had been appointed because he was well informed on wheat matters and had taken a keen interest in all the pools. The Honorary Minister has also said that Mr. McGibbon at the time of his appointment was a wheat grower and had wheat in all the pools. My own belief is that Mr. McGibbon still has wheat in all the pools. Towards the end of last year, however, Mr. McGibbon sold his farm and thus ceased to be a wheat grower. A peculiar point is that although Mr. McGibbon ceased to be a wheat grower towards the end of last year, the Honorary Minister has said that Mr. McGibbon's appointment to the